

What is "Occupy"? A Conflict Analysis Perspective

By Richard Rubenstein, Professor of Conflict Resolution and Public Affairs, rrubenst@gmu.edu

The advent of unexpected forms of social conflict challenges conflict analysts to answer two hard questions. The first is "What's really going on here?" What are the underlying causes, current dynamics, likely outcomes, and possible options for resolving this conflict? The second is, "Why have these events surprised us?" Since we are conflict analysts, why didn't we see this struggle coming and recommend creative ways to deal with it? The answers to these queries are closely related, but let's start with the issue of surprise.

An uncomfortable fact: new eruptions of large-scale social conflict almost always take most academic experts and policymakers by surprise. Virtually no one anticipated the civil disorders of the 1960s and 1970s in North America and Europe, the global rise of religiously-motivated conflict in



Protesters rallying near New York police headquarters.
Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

the years following the Iranian Revolution, the great massacres in Rwanda, the Congo, and Darfur, the uprisings of the Arab Spring, or the eruption of more than 2,500 mass protests in some sixty nations under the Occupy banner. Conflict specialists are equally taken aback when expected struggles fail to materialize – for example, when the

Soviet Union collapses or South Africa dismantles its apartheid system without a bloodbath. While some commentators consider recurrent surprises of this sort a result of the inherent unpredictability of human behavior, others, such as our late colleague, John W. Burton, attribute them to our faulty understanding of society and conflict. To paraphrase Shakespeare: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our nature, but in our theories, that we are taken unawares."

Burton, it seems to me, had it mostly right. Although the timing of mass protest movements is notoriously

Continued on Page 7

Inside This Issue...

- 2 Network: S-CAR Doctoral Graduates in the Field
- 3 Initiatives: Learn about the integral component of Practice in the S-CAR legacy
- 4 Events: Working In The Field (If They Let You In): The Many Challenges Conflict Resolution Practitioners Face in the field
- 5 Opinion: Targeted Killings and the Law of War
Press: Selected S-CAR Media Appearances
- 6 Spotlight: Ahmad Shami
Spotlight: Shane Smith

S-CAR Doctoral Graduates in the Field

By Sandra Cheldelin, Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution and Ph.D. Program Director
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The hallway conversations are always fun when we hear from colleagues and students of another academic job offer for one of our grads. We even enjoy bemoaning—not-so-veiled bragging—the “burdensome” task of submitting letters of recommendation to university search committees. These personal exchanges, along with the timing of the important upcoming 30-year celebration of our School’s existence, raises the obvious questions: where are our PhD graduates, and have they been doing since graduation?

We were the first conflict resolution graduate program standing as an independent academic field. Today, S-CAR is one of only three stand-alone academic institutions housed within a university, offering the original of only four PhD programs dedicated solely to the study of conflict. We brag that our independence allows us to embrace an interdisciplinary study reflected in the curriculum—theories, methodological approaches, and practices from a range of disciplines. We offer hands-on, in-the-field opportunities. Clearly it has worked. Thirty years later, more than 100 undergraduate and graduate programs in the field exist, and our graduates staff many of them.

Our grads are also of course, engaged in important work outside the academy. Our alumni serve in various branches of government—in the US, the Departments of State, Health and Human Services, Education, Environmental Protection Agency and the like, and in other countries, often in their militaries and governmental organizations. Our graduates hold key positions at the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the UN, USAID, USIP, the Peace Corps, ACCORD, and a variety of internationally-based NGOs that intervene in conflict. Several of the NGOs were established by graduates themselves.

A majority of our PhD program alumni, though, have chosen the path of working in the academy: teaching in universities around the globe, actively engaged in creating or staffing new conflict-related programs. Though we do not have all the data, what we have collected is impressive. Seventy-three are employed as full or part-time faculty in colleges and universities. Fourteen of these are outside the US: University of Winnipeg, Canada; University of Peace (3), Costa Rica; American Lebanese University, Lebanon; Sabanci (2) and Balikasir Universities, Turkey; University of Cape Town, South Africa; Colombo University, Sri Lanka; Sumatra University, Indonesia; Seoul National University, Korea; Hiroshima University, Japan; and Javeriana University, Colombia.

Our graduates are employed in 33 US colleges and universities. Public higher education institutions include Adams State College, George Mason, James Madison, Kennesaw State, Kent State, Plattsburgh State, Portland State, Salisbury University, Towson, and the Universities of

Baltimore, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico and North Carolina-Chapel Hill. The private colleges and universities include: American, Arcadia University, Brigham Young University-Hawaii, Champlain College, DePauw, Eastern Mennonite, George Washington, Georgetown, Goucher, Guilford College, Harvard, Middlebury College, Monterey Institute of International Studies (graduate school of Middlebury College), Notre Dame, NoVa Southeastern, Seton Hall, St. Paul University, Swarthmore, and the University of San Diego.



Saira Yamin, Ph.D., teaching at George Mason University. Dr. Yamin has just been appointed as Associate Professor at Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) in Honolulu, Hawaii. Photo: S-CAR.

We have insufficient data regarding our graduates’ titles, tenure-track or term appointments, but of those we know, the range is broad including Lecturer, Assistant, Associate and Full Professorships as well as Academic and Program Directors. Most of the graduates are in programs of conflict resolution. A few exceptions include Gender and Women’s Studies; the University Honors Program; Justice Studies; Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice; and various Schools including Government, Public Policy, Diplomacy, and International Affairs.

As the field evolves over the next thirty years and additional undergraduate and graduate programs emerge, it will be interesting to see how the curricula of these programs reflect the education and training of the faculty—graduates of institutions like S-CAR, and with degrees from CAR. Stay tuned. ■

For our growing list of alumni in academia, please visit:

<http://scar.gmu.edu/people/alumni-in-academia>

Send your updates to scarlib@gmu.edu

network

The S-CAR Practice Project

By Thanos Gatsias, S-CAR Ph.D. Candidate, agatsias@gmu.edu and Yves-Renee Jennings, Drucie French Cumbie Fellow, Special Assistant to Drucie French Cumbie Chair, yjennin@gmu.edu

Practice has occupied a special place in the field of conflict analysis and resolution since its very inception. Practice has also been an integral component of the S-CAR legacy. Multiple conflict resolution initiatives have been carried out by faculty members who have been engaged in practice in a plethora of ways. The S-CAR Practice Project emerged from a realization that, despite the continuous engagement of our faculty in conflict resolution work, a comprehensive 'map' of S-CAR practice had been missing. Equally absent has been a systematic way of communicating practice both within and outside our community. As a result, practice has remained unnoticed and partially recognized and appreciated. For these reasons, Dean Andrea Bartoli and a number of faculty suggested the initiation of the S-CAR Practice Project to share within and outside our community a series of issues related to conflict resolution practice.

The basic idea was to interview faculty members to elicit their views about their practice experience and their opinions on a suggested format or template that they would use for the systematic communication of their practice initiatives. The underlying premise of the project was initially to gain a comprehensive view of how practice has been carried out at S-CAR and to explore ways to systematically and effectively communicate this work. Furthermore, underpinning these objectives was the facilitation of self-reflection about practice at the institutional level while identifying areas requiring improvements. It was therefore hoped that the S-CAR Practice Project initiative would establish the foundation

for a dialectic process, and increase S-CAR self-awareness and intentionality in embracing and supporting practice initiatives carried out by faculty and students. This is meant to be a broader organic and dynamic process, and the practice project initiative, which was launched at Dean Bartoli's request during the Fall of 2010, was one step toward reaching such objectives.

The research for this project was carried out between October 2010 and May 2011 in collaboration with S-CAR graduate research assistants. We interviewed 17 S-CAR faculty members to elicit their views on a series of issues related to conflict resolution practice as they have experienced it. Interview topics included: definition of conflict resolution practice, methods, scope, levels of intervention, partnerships, resources, challenges, ethical concerns, evaluation and attempts to define 'successful' practice.



Experiential Learning trip to Liberia, 2011. Photo: S-CAR.

Methodologically, we adopted a qualitative exploratory approach and, thematically analyzed the data collected through structured interviews based on a series of open-ended questions. Findings resulting from S-CAR faculty members' diverse conflict resolution practice experience, based on the data themes and patterns, included the following:

- Any attempt to define S-CAR conflict resolution practice was complex, given the extensive diversity in how our scholar-practitioners consider practice and the multiplicity of ways in which they have engaged with different stakeholders. Furthermore, challenging the traditional definition of conflict resolution practice was a central theme in many interviews because no clear-cut separation of scholarship and practice can be considered as being relevant in the field of conflict resolution, where scholarship of engagement is a key concept.
- Scholarship of engagement has transformative potentials, for instance, through teaching, publishing, and media appearances. This type of practice centers on sharing insights of conflict resolution expertise so people can incorporate them in their own thinking and ethos.
- Within the frames of engaged scholarship, research is seen as a form of practice and a dialectic process. Thus, social actors can get from the researcher-intervener insights on conflict resolution, allowing them to consider new ways to deal constructively with the issues they face. At the same time, the engaged scholar would benefit from being involved with social actors while acquiring insights that would render his/her practice more relevant to existing social concerns.
- Reflective practice is considered an essential component of conflict resolution practice, as reflection has the potential to increase self-

initiatives

Award Announcement!
MEJDI Tours, an organization founded by Dr. Marc Gopin, Professor at S-CAR, is the first winner of the Intercultural Innovation Award, a partnership between the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the BMW Group, which aims to select and support the most innovated initiatives that encourage intercultural dialogue and cooperation around the world.

Continued on Page 8

Working in the Field (If They Let You In)

By Linda Keuntje, S-CAR M.S. Student, lkeuntje@gmu.edu and Agnieszka Paczynska, S-CAR Associate Director and Undergraduate Program Director, apaczyns@gmu.edu

events

On February 9th, the Central Asia, Africa and Latin America Working Groups co-hosted a conference, “Working in the Field (If They Let You In): The Many Challenges Conflict Resolution Professionals Face Practicing or Conducting Research in the Field.” The event explored a number of challenges and in particular focused on the issue of ethics in research and practice, assessment of data reliability, and physical dangers of working in the field.

The idea for the conference emerged out of discussion among members of the Central Asia Working Group (CAWG) at a time when one member was preparing to leave for Afghanistan and another was exploring literature on corruption in preparation for a course on Conflict and Development. Although the discussion began with an off-the-cuff observation—that most people involved in international work seem to know a



The conference was hosted at GMU's Arlington campus. Photo: S-CAR.

cynical or humorous story about corruption—it soon turned to a more serious exploration of the difficulties encountered when working in the field. CAWG members agreed that although stories of such challenges abound, many conflict resolution researchers and practitioners go to the field with little or no preparation in how to deal with the ethical challenges they are likely to confront. Those participating in this discussion noted that a number of issues seem to be especially problematic. These included how to deal with corruption in its many forms that the researcher/practitioner is likely to encounter; how to ensure the safety of the people and community with whom you are working and how to ensure your own safety in a dangerous environment; and how to assess the credibility of the data you are collecting in conflict, post-conflict, and authoritarian settings.

The CAWG was keen on bringing a more in-depth discussion of Central Asian issues into S-CAR and was exploring possible topics for a conference topic that would explore regional dynamics. The discussion around the challenges researchers and practitioners face in the field convinced CAWG members that examining issues of ethics in practice and research as well as of

corruption and working in difficult environments would be a fascinating lens through which to examine Central Asian political and social contexts. At the same time, CAWG members quickly concluded that the challenges they were interested in exploring were ones researchers and practitioners in other conflict, post-conflict, and authoritarian settings also faced. Organizing this conference in collaboration with the Africa and Latin America Working Groups provided an opportunity to examine the common challenges researchers and practitioners face when working in these regions. It also provided an opportunity for students, researchers to discuss ethical issues that may affect their current and future work.

The conference had three main objectives. The first was to give students from S-CAR and surrounding universities an opportunity to meet with field professionals and become better prepared for working in the future as conflict analysis and resolution professionals. The second objective was to promote and deepen discussions at S-CAR on practice and practice-related issues. Finally, the conference aimed to broaden the discussion of the importance of ethics in fieldwork. As in many other fields, conflict analysis and resolution researchers and practitioners work directly with vulnerable populations. For this reason, it is extremely important that as researchers and practitioners, we are aware of the risks we are taking when we attempt to help and the potential danger we may put people in. For some well-intentioned individuals, the idea of refraining from action in order to avoid additional harm may not be an easy decision to make, and yet that is precisely the decision many of us will face in the course of our work. Furthermore, corruption and associated issues are sometimes the reason theories do not seem to apply well and why, sometimes, the best-planned interventions go awry. A better understanding of the challenges can help practitioners to be prepared with alternative plans when things start to go wrong.

The response to the call for papers confirmed that this topic is on the minds of many researchers and practitioners, not just in conflict resolution but in other fields such as geography, anthropology, and sociology. The range of topics covered in the abstracts included the use of social media to collect data and the ethics behind it, integration of field experience issues into curriculum, working with individuals labeled as “terrorists,” as well as a submission looking to question the basic principles underlying our notion of ethics in field work. ■

Read more and view some of the presentations:

<http://scar.gmu.edu/event/13498>

Targeted Killings and the Law of War

By Eric Johnson, S-CAR M.S. Student, ejohns21@gmu.edu

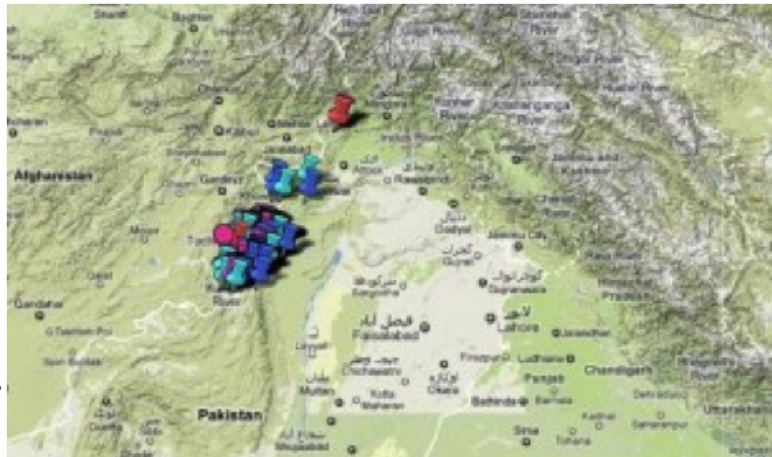
I recently had the privilege of attending an event sponsored by The Aspen Institute's Justice and Society Program entitled, "Targeted Killings and the Law of War." The roundtable discussion brought together leading experts in law and foreign policy, each of whom addressed whether and how U.S. and international law apply to the practice of targeted killings. It was obvious from the nature of the questions and a quick glance through recent headlines that drone strikes would dominate the debate – rightfully so given the onset of the new, advanced technology and the ease with which it can be utilized on (and off) the battlefield.

So far, drone strikes have reportedly been carried out in six countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, and Libya. According to the New America Foundation's drones database, which analyzes U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan, "283 reported drone strikes in northwest Pakistan, including 70 in 2011, from 2004 to the present have killed approximately between 1,717 and 2,680 individuals, of whom around 1,424 to 2,209 were described as militants in reliable press accounts."

Two main themes are immediately clear. First, if you accept the premise that the U.S. is engaged in an armed conflict with non-state actors domiciled in foreign countries which are unable or unwilling to respond to an imminent threat of violence (however one defines "imminent"), do drone strikes adhere to international law according to the Geneva Conventions? Second, according to U.S. law, what rights, if any, are guaranteed to those individuals being targeted, especially if they are U.S. citizens as was the case with Anwar al-Awlaki? Should they be afforded an opportunity to surrender? What about due process and the role of the courts?

The event at The Aspen Institute made it clear that the answers to these questions remain unclear at best and non-existent at worst. Targeted killings will no doubt be a policy – covert or not – that faces increasing legal scrutiny at home and abroad. For this reason, and because after-the-fact adjudication is unlikely to happen in the near future, many experts are urging the executive and legislative branches to clarify the substantive and procedural law surrounding the use of targeted killings – before others attempt to do so for us. ■

Follow Eric on Twitter: [@ejohnsonaz](https://twitter.com/ejohnsonaz)



The New America Foundation drones database analyzes the reported number of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan since 2004. Photo: New America Foundation.

Selected S-CAR Media Appearances

Analysis of Middle East Hot Spots

Aziz Abu Sarah, Co-Executive Director of Middle East Projects at the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University
Fox 5 News, 02/07/2012

Implications of potential strike on Iran by Israel

Michael Shank, S-CAR Ph.D. Candidate, US Vice President, Institute for Economics and Peace
Al Jazeera, 02/03/2012

Congress makes Elmo cry by defunding Palestinian 'Sesame Street'

Ibrahim Sharqieh, S-CAR Alumnus, Deputy Director, Brookings Doha Center
The Christian Science Monitor, 01/31/2012

A Different Approach to Russia, China, in terms of Syrian and Global Governance

Marc Gopin, James H. Laue Professor of World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, Director, Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University
Marc Gopin Citizen Diplomacy, 01/31/2012

Letter to the Editor: EU as a model for peace

Dr. Dennis Sandole, Professor of Conflict Resolution and International Relations
Christian Science Monitor, 01/30/2012

<http://scar.gmu.edu/media>

press

Ahmad Shami, S-CAR M.S. Student

By Catherine Ammen, S-CAR M.S. Alumna, Knowledge Management Associate, cammen@gmu.edu



Ahmad Shami Photo: A. Shami

Education is a constant theme for Ahmad Shami, a Master's student at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, at George Mason University. Ahmad believes that "education for Palestinians is a tool of resisting, education is a tool of creating more options and more hope." Growing up in Ramallah, Palestine, Ahmad studied Business Administration in undergrad but was inspired by the resilience of his grandfather, who lost three sons to the conflict, and who instilled in his family the desire to be involved in peacebuilding and create change especially through education. The Shami Foundation, founded by Ahmad's family, worked in Beit Ur Al-Tahta Village in the West Bank to develop infrastructure, set up a girls' high school, and offer scholarships for girls to attend higher

education in their community. Ahmad strongly believes that it is essential to provide equal educational opportunities for all Palestinians, to build Palestine through Palestinian minds.

Ahmad has been a participant and facilitator of dialogue sessions since the tender young age of 14, and came to S-CAR to shift from years of practice to focus on a more academic and theoretical approach to conflict resolution. At S-CAR, Ahmad is especially interested in connecting his classes on theory and social change to his work with the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution (CRDC) to show the different narratives of the Palestinians-Israeli conflict.

Eventually, Ahmad wishes to return to Palestine and teach after one day pursuing his PhD; but recognizing the need to adapt to what is needed depending on the circumstances, his ultimate goal is to use education to develop perspectives and, ultimately, to create a turning point in the conflict. Ahmad adds, "as my father always told me: 'we Palestinians lost our land, but because we've managed to educate ourselves we have not disappeared.'" ■

Shane Smith, CAR Student

By Brydin Banning, Director of Undergraduate Student Services, bbanning@gmu.edu

Shane Smith, a junior from Dallas, TX, has been interested in foreign affairs since high school. After working with two "lost boys of Sudan," he realized his desire to work in that field, particularly on issues relating to Africa. Initially a government and international politics major, he learned about conflict analysis and resolution while training to be a Mason Ambassador, a student representative of the university tasked with assisting the Admissions office with welcoming and assisting prospective undergraduate students and their families. Attracted to the youth and vitality of the CAR program, Shane changed his major and hasn't looked back.

During the fall semester, Shane was selected by the Center of Global Education at Mason to travel to London to take part in classes, as well as an internship at Peace One Day, a non-profit organization that aims to promote peace through arts and education. At his internship, he was responsible for assisting with communication and outreach efforts. While in London, he was also able to attend events with human rights activists, Parliament members, and other peacemakers.

Shane understands the value of this international work experience and hopes to leverage it one day for a career at the U.S. Department of



Shane Smith. Photo: S. Smith.

State. In the meantime, he has recently accepted an internship offer with the Office of the Secretary for the U.S. Department of Education for the spring semester. Grateful for these opportunities, Shane acknowledges the importance for S-CAR students to gain experience outside of the classroom and hopes to continue to do so throughout his remaining time at Mason. ■

What is "Occupy"? A Conflict Analysis Perspective

Continued from page 1

difficult to specify (one recalls a disheartened Lenin complaining that the Russian Revolution would not occur in his lifetime), they can be predicted with rough accuracy, provided that the analyst is paying close attention to relevant social and psychological factors.

The Occupy movement is the product of changes in social organization and human motivation that largely escaped analysis because prevailing theories directed our attention elsewhere. Most of those theories, to speak of them generally, were of two types. Stability theories, emphasizing the factors that make for social integration and political adaptation, viewed Western society (in particular, the United States) as "post-ideological," and therefore no longer subject to intense internal conflicts of the sort that produced the labor-management struggles of the New Deal era or the mass protests of the decade following John F. Kennedy's assassination. Conflict theories, while focusing on failures of integration and adaptation, took as their main text the story of social identity – the struggles of oppressed or marginalized ethnic, racial, religious, gender, and cultural groups for recognition and fair treatment, and the need for established systems to accommodate their demands.

These theories seemed diametrically opposed, but under the surface there were links. Many analysts of both schools assumed that, since the underlying socioeconomic system ("late capitalism" or "finance capitalism") was either stable or irreplaceable, basic questions of social order involving class structure and ranking, social equality, and the control of politics by major financial interests, were "off the table." When they spoke about basic human needs at all, the analysts tended to focus on people's needs for identity, recognition, and autonomy – not for jobs, effective participation, and social justice. Even when the economic system plunged into its worse crisis since 1929, these mindsets persisted. Stability theories were so strongly held that few scholars believed that the Arab uprisings of 2011 or even the Greek and Spanish demonstrations provoked by the economic crisis could help inspire protests in "mature" capitalist nations like the United States. Identity theories were so strongly held that the re-emergence of social inequality, corporate corruption, and the need for economic democracy as crucial issues for Westerners went largely unnoticed.¹

What, exactly, do conflict studies specialists need to know? What "research questions" should we be addressing? First, I believe, we need to know what made so many people long quiescent, where matters of public policy were concerned, adopt a highly activist mode and turn out not just to protest injustice but to participate in acts of civil disobedience. Assuming that many activists were mobilized, in part, by their direct exposure to the economic crisis, what other factors came into play to translate economic pain into a craving for radical change? The received wisdom used to be that

economic downturns dampened protest movements rather than generating them. In this case, however (as in certain previous cases of mass mobilization for change), lowered satisfactions seemed actually to engender radical hopes. Despite Ted Robert Gurr's pioneering work, this phenomenon is still poorly understood.²

Second, we would like to plot possible future trajectories for the protest movement and for counter-movements of the Center and the Right. Although numbers are hard to come by, the total number of activists participating in occupations in the United States probably does not exceed a few hundred thousand. Yet polls conducted by Pew and other reputable organizations establish that more than 60% of Americans are in sympathy with their basic egalitarian, anti-corporate, pro-democracy sentiments. Does this mean that the movement is fated to become larger and more important in the coming years? Or is it likely to be divided, co-opted, and weakened by the political dynamics of a presidential election?

Authorities have now evicted occupiers from public parks in New York, Oakland, Denver, Salt Lake City, Portland, Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and other cities. Evictions notwithstanding, protestors in virtually every location have declared that they will continue to engage in occupations (for example, of foreclosed or abandoned homes) and other acts of nonviolent civil disobedience, as well as working to build a movement for radical social and political change. According to the steering committee of one Washington, D.C. organization,

Shifting power to the American people requires much more than an occupation. The Occupy Movement needs to build on four strong components – (1) non-violent protest and civil resistance, (2) non-participation in the existing corporate finance-dominated economy, (3) the development of concrete plans and policies to transform the corporate economy into a people's economy, and (4) ending government dominated by money by shifting political power to the American people.³

What everyone would like to know is whether this movement has "legs," and, if so, what its future direction and function are likely to be. The point originally made by many critics that the protestors had no political program had some apparent validity at first, but now seems increasingly less germane. Movement representatives have called not only for a renewal of occupations on a large scale in spring 2012, but also for a series of conferences to discuss concretizing political policies. Already, there is considerable discussion of demands for a tax on financial transactions, elimination of the capital

Continued on Page 8

What is "Occupy"? A Conflict Analysis Perspective

Continued from page 7

gains tax preference and other loopholes for the wealthy, creation of a federally-funded and popularly controlled jobs program, development of community alternatives to the corporate economy, eliminating the private financing of political campaigns, and more.

There is a good deal of theoretical confusion about what demands like this mean. When some commentators criticize the movement for not making "concrete, realistic demands," what they are really criticizing is the unwillingness of the occupiers to play the political game according to conventional political rules (for example, by picking major party candidates for office and supporting them). Most occupiers are not interested in making demands that are relatively easy to realize because they are consistent with existing structures of power and privilege. Most are even less interested in becoming part of the base of either major political party. The great question is not whether they will have political influence; they have already helped move issues of social class and inequality to the center of national consciousness. The great question

is whether they will have the sort of independent influence enjoyed by certain previous movements of mass protest in America, from the Abolitionists of the 1840s and labor radicals of the 1930s to the antiwar/civil rights/cultural liberation movements of the 1960s.

Are we, in fact, at the beginning of another one- or two-decade period of mass protest in America? Or is this movement already "history?" Belatedly, in the search for convincing answers to such questions, we are finally getting around to studying crucial social structural issues and their political/cultural implications.

Happily, it's never too late to begin. ■

Endnotes:

1 Students seeking enlightenment on these issues in the days before the Occupy movement emerged would not find very much to inspire them in the traditional Conflict Studies canon. This is why so many of them found themselves watching Slavoj Zizek, Jacques Ranciere, and other critical thinkers lecturing on YouTube or creating new journals of their own, like the S-CAR on-line journal, unrestmagazine.com

2 Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Paradigm, 40th Anniv. Ed., 2011)

3 Statement by The National Occupation of Washington DC (NOW DC). See www.October2011.org advert.

The S-CAR Practice Project

Continued from page 3

awareness and help scholar-practitioners identify potential inadequacies of existing practices, explore new possibilities, and develop innovative perspectives. Thus, reflective practice has an evaluative dimension through which individuals can assess the effectiveness of existing paradigms in light of new insights.

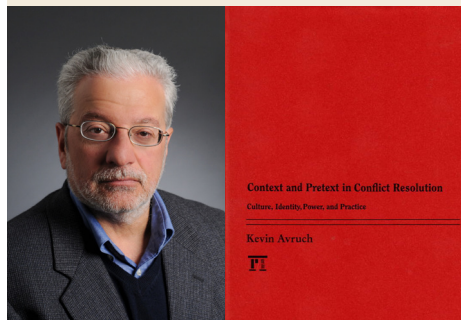
- Many S-CAR faculty members have used elicitive processes in their practice because they believe that those who have experienced a conflict have a better understanding of the conflict dimensions and that such insider's knowledge can inform their intervention process.
- The question of how to systematically communicate practice through a flexible template that would be part of the S-CAR online platform generated a wide range of views among the interviewed faculty members, some of whom have been involved in traditional forms of practice and argued that such a template might facilitate the systematization of practice communication. Others were hesitant because they perceived that such a template would pose ethical issues due to the

confidential and delicate nature of their practice. Still, others believed that the form of practice they have been engaged in could not be framed through the traditional practice lenses of such a systematic template.

Overall, the study reveals that any template adopted as a communication mechanism would need to provide sufficient flexibility to permit S-CAR scholar-practitioners to communicate about their practice initiatives based on their own judgment. ■

Book Announcement!

Context and Pretext in Conflict Resolution:
Culture, Identity, Power, and Practice
by Kevin Avruch



GEORGE MASON School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution

UNIVERSITY 3351 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 4D3, Arlington, VA 22201

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Once More unto the Heights: Race, Class and Conflict in America

By Solon Simmons, Assistant Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, ssimmon5@gmu.edu

According to the myth, in the late summer of 1862, President Lincoln faced a dire challenge. His valiant effort to preserve the union was stymied by the forces of white Southern resistance in Northern Virginia. His strategic position was deteriorating as the European powers began to lose faith in the viability of the Northern cause, and it was broadly whispered that the British were on the verge of recognizing the Confederate States of America, thereby emboldening the separatists and validating in law and customs the divisions that had taken hold on the field of battle. Lincoln needed a



Sunken Road at Fredericksburg. Photo taken on May 2, 1863 during the 2nd Battle of Fredericksburg. Photo: National Park Service.

demonstration of power written in blood and iron that would help him to close the action of the first act of the larger drama of American freedom and open another. After three bloody days along the banks of Antietam Creek, Lincoln proclaimed on September 22 of that fateful year that if rebels did not cease in their efforts to divide the

country, all slaves held in those southern territories would be freed—which is of course just what happened.

As in many of the efforts that marked the progress of the great status reversion that began with this moment of transvaluation in race relations, a moment of tenuous triumph was followed in quick succession with a tragic reversal of fortune born of strategic obtuseness. The tactical stalemate of Antietam was followed by the strategic disaster of the Battle of Fredericksburg. As anyone who has visited that haunting battlefield will know, the centerpiece of the disaster for the forces of freedom came as General Ambrose

Continued on Page 7

Inside This Issue...

- 2 Network: S-CAR Dual Master's degree program in Malta
- 3 Initiatives: Learn about the research of Undergraduate students in the CAR program
- 4 Events: Global Problematique Symposium
- 5 Opinion: Violence and Guns in America
Press: Selected S-CAR Media Appearances
- 6 Spotlight: Edi Jurkovic
Spotlight: Alex Cromwell

Reflections: A Dual Degree Program in Malta

By Jessica Lohmann, S-CAR M.S. Alumna, jslohmann23@gmail.com

network

While it seems like just yesterday, it has been nine months since the eleven students from the inaugural cohort of the dual Master's degree program run jointly by S-CAR and the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC) have stepped foot in a Maltese classroom and seven months since we submitted our theses.

When we first set foot into our classroom in Valletta, Malta, it was apparent that the diversity of our small class was high. We all had different backgrounds, but over the next nine months we became a close-knit family. We came from America, Canada, Japan, and Malta. We studied government, international relations, sociology, psychology, and a plethora of languages. We worked in the private sector, with NGOs, at the Maltese Prime Minister's Office, and the US State Department. Our combined credentials reached far and wide and allowed for an enriching academic experience.

In the nine months since we were last together, our experiences have only continued to grow. Our geographical diversity has widened as we are now spread between the US, Canada, Malta, France, Turkey, and Austria. In seven short months, my classmates have already obtained amazing opportunities that include: working in the Maltese Diplomatic Corps; helping to create a home textile company from the ground up; obtaining an appointment as a US Presidential Management Fellow; gaining mediation certifications; researching topics that



Taken at The Pub in Valletta. (clockwise from front left): Brian Farrell, Michael Sheppard, Natalie Zarb, Stephen Pinkstaff, Tom McGrath, Kyoko Jjo, Jessica Lohmann, Ylenia Caruna, Andre Vella). Photo: Jessica Lohmann.

include the use of social media in the Arab Spring, how religion and stereotypes affect conflict, and refugee issues in Turkey.

Many of us don't see our time in Malta as an end to academia; instead, it aroused new interests that can only be subdued with further research and education. This shouldn't come as much of a surprise given that 11 of us were crazy enough to tackle two Master's degrees in just over a year. Many would like to obtain PhDs, and others are looking to further their understanding of conflict resolution in specific areas such as theology or law.

We have come a long way since we were thrown together with strangers in a foreign land to study conflict resolution. Countless hours spent at cafes writing essays, preparing presentations and debating Galtung, Burton, and Volkan have come and gone. Picking our professors brains over a pint at the pub after the end of another demanding module is no longer our bi-weekly routine.

Equipped with theories, knowledge, and reflective practice we now enter a new and exciting chapter in our lives. We are all on our way to becoming successful conflict resolution practitioners in a number of different fields. I don't know exactly what the future holds for the inaugural Malta class, but if the last nine months are any indication, I can't wait to see what my classmates achieve in the years to come! ■



Taken on Merchant Street in Valletta. In picture (from left to right): Jessica Lohman, Suzan Tugberk, Michael Sheppard, Natalie Zarb, Stephen Pinkstaff. Photo: Mark Goodale.

S-CAR Students Tackle Independent Research

By Brydin Banning, S-CAR Director of Undergraduate Student Services, bbanning@gmu.edu

When you say "research" to most undergraduate students studying the social sciences, they usually react in one of two ways: 1) They assume research is limited to hard science, with experiments being conducted in laboratories with elaborate machinery and/or white mice and therefore doesn't concern them, or 2) they understand the concept of research in these fields but grimace with fear. However, S-CAR's undergraduate program boasts three women who shatter these stereotypes. Catherine Dines, Krystal Thomas, and Gabriella Porcaro have all voluntarily developed research projects related to their coursework in the Conflict Analysis and Resolution major and have each received funding to support their research through the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program (URSP), sponsored by the Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research (OSCAR).

Catherine Dines, a senior from the Buffalo, NY metropolitan area, discovered a gap in the services provided by the United States for deaf refugees in comparison to the EU programs for this population. She learned about the situation while studying abroad at Oxford her junior year. From her experience working for nonprofits, she understands the importance of statistical data and its impact on funding and, therefore, developed a proposal, with the help of her mentor Dr. Patricia Maulden, to conduct research to fill the knowledge gap on deaf refugees.

Award Announcement!



The School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution is proud to announce that Craig M. Zelizer, PhD Alumnus from the class of 2004, is the recipient of a George Mason University Distinguished Alumni Award. Dr. Zelizer is Associate Director of the Conflict Resolution M.A. Program in the Department of Government at Georgetown University. His areas of expertise include working with youth from violent conflict regions, civil society development and capacity building

in transitional societies, program evaluation and design, working on conflict sensitivity and mainstreaming across development sectors, the connection between trauma and conflict, and arts and peacebuilding.

Dr. Zelizer was a cofounder and is a senior partner in the Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT), a leading nonprofit organization dedicated to building peace through innovation and practice. In addition to his work with ACT, he has worked for several international organizations including the International Research and Exchanges Board and the U.S. Institute of Peace, and received a number of fellowships and awards, including serving as a Fulbright Junior Scholar in Hungary for two years and a National Security Education Program Fellow in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He is the cofounder of the Peace and Collaborative Development Network, a leading online platform connecting more than 23,000 organizations and professionals around the world. He received a BA from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and an MA in sociology from Central European University.

Junior Krystal Thomas draws from her personal experiences growing up as one of the few minorities in Charles Town, WV as she explores interpersonal conflict that occurs when an individual feels disconnected with societal expectations for his or her identity group. Krystal, who is working with Dr. Leslie Dwyer, is interviewing black women about their experiences with race and identity with the hopes of expanding the social perception of what it means to be a black woman today.

Gabriella Porcaro is using her role on campus as a Resident Advisor to develop her research regarding nonviolent communication on college campuses. A junior from Warwick, RI, Gabriella initially became interested in preventing violence in high school and has furthered her knowledge about the subject through coursework on multiculturalism and identities. After Arthur Romano, her professor for CONF 330: Community, Group, and Organizational Conflict Analysis and Resolution, saw her interest in the topic, he suggested applying for the URSP to conduct research to create a training program on preventative nonviolent communication.

All three students have experienced challenges in conducting their research, from narrowing the scope of the project to securing buy-in from participants to just being able to communicate with their subjects. Their journeys, however, have been overwhelmingly positive. When asked what advice they would give students considering research projects, their resounding collective response was, "Go for it!" With the support of their faculty members and the community of scholars created by the URSP, Catherine, Krystal, and Gabriella all presented at the Third Annual Undergraduate Research Conference on Thursday, April 19 on the Fairfax campus, and they plan to continue their research. We look forward to these three women continuing the tradition of scholarly inquiry at S-CAR while proving that research isn't such a scary prospect after all. ■

Book Announcement!

Edited by Christopher R. Mitchell and Landon E. Hancock including contributions from Yves-Renee Jennings, Wallace Warfield, Catalina Rojas, Mery Rodriguez, and Irakli Kakabadze.



Local Peacebuilding and National Peace

Interaction Between Grassroots and Elite Processes

Edited by Christopher R. Mitchell and Landon E. Hancock

initiatives

Global Problematique Symposium

By Bardia Mehrabian, S-CAR M.S. Student, bmehrabi@gmu.edu

Events

With an elective titled *Global Governance and Complex Problem-Solving in the Post-9/11 World*, one would be crazy not to sign up for it as a Master's student at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Of course, after receiving the syllabus from Dr. Dennis Sandole, the course instructor, and seeing a 15-20 book reading list, one might need to be slightly unhinged (like myself) to actually take it. That said, Dr. Dennis Sandole makes a compelling case as to why he created this S-CAR course. It was a course born out of events that took place in the last decade, and an article from the July 9, 2008 issue of *The Economist*. Sandole made the case that the current infrastructure for "global management" is incapable of handling the problems of the 21st century. These new century problems - dubbed the Global Problematique

cause to the global community.

This is what led a few peers and me to form a Global Problematique Working Group within S-CAR with the explicit objective of addressing systemic global problems.

As a group, we organized and held a symposium on April 12, 2012 to introduce the DC academic and professional community to Global Problematique as a beginning for dialogue on the subject and to cultivate interest. The symposium consisted of a panel of speakers who discussed the current status of the Global Problematique and current actions in place to address it. This was followed by roundtable discussions, including panel speakers, network professionals, academics, and others, to allow for a collective thinking process on the Global Problematique.

The event generated excitement among panelists and attendees to engage in further discussion on this issue. Interestingly, the panelists themselves, each with a great deal of experience in their respective fields, had the opportunity to meet with each other, and realized that they are engaged in projects with similar objectives, despite the differences in their backgrounds and disciplines. This shed light on how little professionals mingle with one another across different fields, which may hinder comprehensive and innovative strategies to address major global problems. The symposium demonstrated that even a small group of dedicated students can elicit change, simply by bringing the right people together.

I can safely say that the Global Problematique Symposium did achieve this objective, and as such, it was a success! ■



From Left to Right: Dr. Dennis Sandole, Jorge Roldan, Dr. Sekou Toure, Donya Maria Twyman, and Emira Woods. Photo: S-CAR.

- include global warming, pandemics, deforestation, poverty, overpopulation, WMD proliferation, resource scarcity, terrorism, and many global systemic problems not confined by borders or sector. Twentieth century Westphalian institutions and discourse are rendered obsolete in handling these complex, interconnected, cross-border problems. Unilateralism need not apply.

And yet, from the first decade of our century until now, the United States continues to engage in a unilateralist foreign policy in tackling these issues, which has proven to be woefully inefficient. A decade of war has caused an entire generation of global youth to become traumatized by war, a severe global financial downturn, and interest and resources to be squandered on "threats" that are miniscule compared to what severe climate change and food insecurity can

S-CAR Community Events

Why Social Groups Split: A Hamas-Fatah Case Study

Arlington Campus, Founders 118,
04/26/2012

Center for Peacemaking Practice Lunch Discussion: Creating a Community of Practice

Arlington Campus, Truland 555, 05/03/2012

<http://scar.gmu.edu/events-roster>

Violence and Guns in America

By Jay Filipi, S-CAR M.S. Student, jfilipi@gmu.edu

On April 2, 2012, former President Bill Clinton stated that the "'tragedy' of the killing of Trayvon Martin should cause a re-thinking of the 'Stand Your Ground' law."¹ On the other side, the NRA, whose 2005 lobbying campaign got the law passed, initially supports the law in its current state, stating that it is "still a good law".² Proponents of the stand your ground law suggest that its repeal would begin a slippery slope to the end of gun rights.³ Clearly, the killing of Trayvon Martin has exposed a perennial American conflict around the second amendment:

A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.

On the right in America, this issue is about security and liberty. Owning a gun provides protection that the state is unable to provide against criminals. Citizens owning guns also reduces the state's monopoly over the means of violence - and the means of defending liberty. This is an understandable position if you hold the premise that all criminals own guns, or if you remember the asymmetric violence the state is able to produce.

Liberals tend to argue that the constitutional amendment is, indeed, sacred, however there are limitations to this. First, increasing the number of guns and gun owners sets off a spiral of escalating conflict. They may also point to statistics on gun use in cases of domestic violence,⁴ or psychological studies that show carrying a gun makes you believe others are also carrying.⁵ Largely, the liberal argument looks at particular cases and seeks to reform existing laws with arguments based on the ambiguity of the amendment in order to protect innocents.

Whether the goal is to enhance or limit the second amendment, they are both aimed at protection of self and other, as a means to promote liberty in America. Unfortunately, both tactics fail to assess the reason why Americans resort to violence when feeling insecure or threatened. Gun violence is a symptom of a larger social process of alienation. Therefore, emphasis on gun laws is a misdirection when it comes to the promotion of liberty and security, as it is impossible to "combat alienation with alienated forms."⁶ Guns and gun laws are neither the problem nor the solution, rather it is mistrust of an alienated and marginalized 'Other' (a process that sometimes manifests as racism), and the solution is solidarity with the other, and building an American community that is whole.

Let us take a moment to reflect on something. Trayvon Martin is dead. We cannot change this, however with solidarity we can prevent this from happening again. ■



Ideals that helped to inspire the Second Amendment in part are symbolized by the minutemen. Photo: Aldaron, Flickr.

Endnotes:

¹ Jake Tapper (April 2, 2012). "President Clinton Hopes Trayvon Martin Case Leads to Reappraisal of 'Stand Your Ground' Laws." ABC News. <http://ow.ly/an2Df>

² Amanda J. Crawford (March 30, 2012). "Trayvon Killing Stalls Stand Your Ground Laws." BloombergBusinessWeek. <http://ow.ly/an4la>

³ A. Trullinger (March 30, 2012). "Who Does the 'Stand Your Ground' Law Really Protect?" Opposing Views. <http://ow.ly/an40w>

⁴ "Facts on Firearms and Domestic Violence." Violence Policy Center. <http://ow.ly/an4m5>

⁵ Malcolm Ritter (March 20, 2012). "Holding a gun may make you think others are, too." MSNBC. <http://ow.ly/an4vg>

⁶ See Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*. (New York: Zone Books, 1999): 122

Selected S-CAR Media Appearances

When diplomatic opportunities were dismissed

Michael Shank, S-CAR Ph.D. Candidate, US Vice President, Institute for Economics and Peace
Financial Times, 04/11/2012

Building Bridges Between Two Communities

Marc Gopin, James H. Laue Professor of World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, Director, Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University
National Iranian American Council (NIAC), 04/05/2012

Science of unintended consequences

Dr. Dennis Sandole, Professor of Conflict Resolution and International Relations
Financial Times, 03/13/2012

<http://scar.gmu.edu/media>

press

Edi Jurkovic, S-CAR M.S. Student

By Catherine Ammen, S-CAR M.S. Alumna, Knowledge Management Associate, cammen@gmu.edu



Edi Jurkovic Photo: E. Jurkovic

Edi Jurkovic, an S-CAR Master's student and John Burton Librarian, brings a new perspective to his classes after spending his career serving in the military in former Yugoslavia, the Army of the Republic of Srpska, and finally in the Armed Forces of Bosnia Herzegovina - when the armies merged after the

war. Edi grew up in Bosnia, but has lived and traveled all over the Balkans and much of Europe during his military tenure. Due to his previous experience and background in conflict situations, Edi is interested in understanding conflict and how to prevent it.

Edi is particularly interested in improving civilian-military cooperation. He has trained

civilians, senior military staff, as well as young officers who will be deployed in peacekeeping missions all over the world. One of the difficulties Jurkovic has found in his work is that civilians are reluctant to work with the military, but he believes it is necessary to find common ground on ways to cooperate, such that neither group loses their integrity, or compromises the goal of the military missions.

Edi was a teenager during the Yugoslav Wars, and could not understand how the war could become so violent in such a short period of time, and how parties could become so polarized almost overnight. He wants to better understand the process behind this kind of polarization, especially as related to what he refers to as the 'artificial' changing of history by conflict parties.

Edi can often be found in the John Burton library between classes, piecing together computers, and sharing his delicious home-made meals with colleagues. He met his wife Melissa on a ski trip in the Balkans, and the happy couple were married last November in Virginia where they currently reside. Included in the wedding for guests were cookbooks of their favorite recipes. As Edi has demonstrated in the library, the love of food brings people together. ■

Alex Cromwell, S-CAR M.S. Student

By Yasmina Mrabet, S-CAR Newsletter Editor, ymrabet@gmu.edu

Alex Cromwell is a graduating Master's student at S-CAR, as well as Director of Operations at the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution (CRDC). Alex grew up in a church focused on bringing peace to the world, a background that sparked his interest in conflict resolution. As an undergrad, he studied psychology, with plans of becoming a counselor. It was while applying to graduate programs in this area that he discovered a degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution was possible. He immediately shifted gears, and with a strong interest in international conflict, especially in the Middle East region, he began his studies at S-CAR.

Alex has particularly enjoyed his work with CRDC, where he has had the chance to work on the overseas classes that it runs. "I had the opportunity to travel to Israel and Palestine with 30 other students in January of this year," Alex said, "and it changed my life." From his time at S-CAR, Alex has gained insight into the complexity that multiple narratives and layers bring to each conflict. He has also developed an understanding of the nuances that are involved in long-term peacebuilding efforts, particularly when dealing with polarized societies.

When he graduates, Alex plans to continue



Alex Cromwell. Photo: A. Cromwell.

working with CRDC, and he looks forward to taking on new projects and responsibilities. Alex is also a musician and enjoys working with youth - he hopes to incorporate music and youth empowerment into his work in the conflict resolution field. ■

Once More unto the Heights: Race, Class and Conflict in America

Continued from page 1

Burnside sent one brigade after another of foolhardy veterans up the slopes of a steep and impossibly fortified hill called Marye's Heights. On the surrounding property of what is now the residence of the President of Mary Washington University, thousands of union soldiers would fall in that field like ripe crops before a thresher. The general cause was good, but the specific plan was a desperate failure. Marye's Heights should now be seen as an axial moment in the cause of global solidarity and ethnoracial reconciliation, but it should also be recognized as the strategic blunder it was. I see it as the master metaphor for understanding the vicissitudes of racial conflict in America.

Now I would like to shift the conversation from the distant past to the onrushing present. This spring I had the luxury of checking out of the American news cycle for a couple of weeks while teaching in Malta about identity and conflict. I took the opportunity to detoxify from the vitriol that characterizes our public sphere, with greater salience in election years. Coming back into the conversation I was shocked to find how escalated the debate about the death of Trayvon Martin had become in my absence. As in many similar incidents in the aftermath of the "Reagan revolution" of neo-conservative principles, Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and other important African American

leaders were charging up the hill with fierce urgency to demonstrate just how unjust our system remains with respect to race subordination. It is not difficult to see how one of the fruits of the civil rights struggle is a criminal justice system that lionizes cruelty in pursuit of abstract security. The language I heard was hot and visceral and it was difficult not to be swept along in its wake. After several weeks of mostly calm reflection, augmented by several exhibits of what might understandably be labeled white backlash (John Derbyshire's "The Talk: Nonblack version" stands out here), I now feel the moment is ripe to provide a theoretical perspective on this most

recent episode of racial conflict that helps to explain what we are doing when we talk about race in America. It is important that we begin asking ourselves why it is that we always talk past one another while at the same time sacrificing the efforts of good people in a struggle for racial justice that is poorly grounded in a plausible discursive strategy.

To extend the analogy, the way we talk about race is to send another brigade up Marye's Heights where we should instead fight on other ground. As difficult as it is to accept, the forces of reaction (even members of this host who fail to see themselves in this light) occupy the discursive high ground. Desperate as it is to long run civil society, to attempt to take the remaining entrenchments of racial intolerance by direct assault will be extraordinarily costly. The twilight struggle against racial intolerance and eurosupremacy will continue in this world even as we leave it, but if we are to leave it well, it will be because we also paid close attention to seemingly old fashioned ideas.

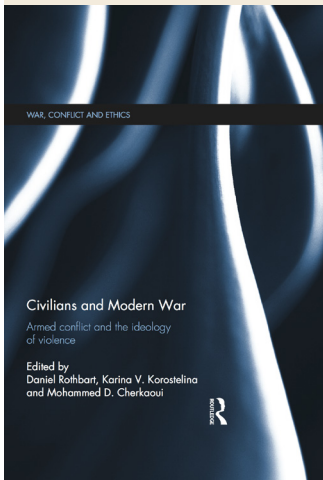
Progressives often struggle as part of what are called new social movements which focus on the abuses of power that orbit issues of identity. They are fighting the last war. The new energy is in the area of the old social movements and the revolutions, which took as their objects unequal opportunity structures and oppressive state systems as their respective objects. Respect for women, the LGBTQ, people of color and the disabled has developed at a shocking pace over my relatively short lifetime, but at the same time we have seen an erosion of the moral economy—which is the reason that I am lucky enough to be writing to you today—around the world. Members of the birth cohorts that follow mine will find it more difficult to get a quality education and a good job than I did, and only the most successful of them can ever look forward to the kinds of savings that will lead to an end of life lived with the dignity of independent means. As we have admirably focused on dividing the middle class pie more equitably, cynical forces have made sure to capitalize on the opportunity to shrink the middle of the pie. President Lyndon Johnson famously quipped after he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that he had lost the South for a generation. What he did not anticipate was that those southerners would be clever enough (as they always have been) to ensure that he had buried the American Left for the next three. Having lost the resource of the more cunning Southern mind in the arena of politics, the Democratic Party has yet to realize how tragic its lack of strategic generalship has become.

My argument in brief is that the big fight for racial justice (and for other forms of ascriptive equality) in the twenty-first century will be won, if it is to be won, on the plains of rhetoric equality—economic equality conceived in universalistic and de-racialized language—through an anti-exploitation framing, not an anti-supremacy framing. Convincing demoralized and desperate white folk that they are subtle bigots in the era after Obama will simply be too difficult, and as long as the unwitting heirs of the white South can meet the forces of progress on a ground of their choosing, i.e.

Continued on Page 8

Book Announcement!

Edited by Daniel Rothbart, Karina V. Korostelina and Mohammed D. Cherkaoui including contributions from Neta Oren, Richard Rubenstein, Susan Hirsch, Andrea Bartoli, and Tetsushi Ogata.



Once More unto the Heights: Race, Class and Conflict in America

Continued from page 7

in debates about culture that employ the tropes of diversity and inclusion, they can gleefully anticipate a stalemate at the mythical Rappahannock River that has characterized our conversation since about 1978.

My advice (which I realize is provocative) to those who would transform the bitter conflict around race in America to adopt an older idiom that disentangles the rhetoric of race and class—to de-Katrina our debate if you will—thereby building an emboldened coalition of progressive forces that can carry a majority sufficiently large to enable legislation to pass the Senate. Senators Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and John Cornyn of Texas and their allies have fortified the high ground of our national conversation with metaphorical cannons of freedom talk behind the stone wall of neoliberal ideology. An appeal to cultural tolerance, though helpful in many cases, will not be sufficient to reconquer the perennial Virginia of the American imaginary. Culture war is the wrong ground on which to fight. The beloved community will only arise through another round of the American version of class politics—one that clings fiercely to the imagery of free enterprise, equal opportunity (not equal outcomes) and fair competition. The great status reversion begun in the 1860s has not taken its final course toward the end of history, but the question before us is, do we have the courage not to try once again to take the hill? ■



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American Democracy & Conflict

A Tale of Two Incommensurate Visions of the City on the Hill¹

By Dennis J.D. Sandole, Professor of Conflict Resolution and International Relations, dsandole@gmu.edu

The current U.S. presidential campaign between President Barack Obama and former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney is one of the most bitterly fought contests in American history. It is a form of domestic warfare occurring within the larger context of gridlock and decisionmaking paralysis, causing alarm globally as well as nationally: The U.S., the world's "indispensable nation," no longer "works!"

I am less concerned here with how we arrived at this dysfunctional situation – e.g., Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell's veritable declaration of war in January 2009 that his "single most important goal for the next four years [was] to ensure that Barack Obama [was] a one-term president."² Instead, I am more concerned with what might be done to mitigate this

toxic state of affairs. To assist in this project, I have sought the wisdom of one of America's premier political scientists, Robert A. Dahl, who has explicitly addressed conflict and conflict handling in the American political system.³

According to Dahl, "the framers deliberately sought to build conflict into [our] constitutional structure,"⁴ through the fragmentation of power and system of checks and



Photo: Flickr User Glyn Lowe Photoworks.

balances between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the central government, and the competing jurisdictions of the federal and state levels of government. Even without this structured basis for conflict, however, the very nature of "being human" makes conflict "an inescapable aspect" of communal life.⁵ James Madison, fourth president of the United States, subscribed to this theory of conflict. Writing in *The Federalist*, Madison declared that our

commentary

Inside This Issue...

- 2 Events: S-CAR's Annual Welcome Dinner
- 3 Initiatives: S-CAR's Insight Conflict Resolution Program
- 5 Student Opinion: Improving Rhetoric About Rape
- Press: S-CAR Op-Eds, Letters to the Editor, and Media Appearances.
- 6 Spotlight: Soolmaz Aboali
- Spotlight: Clara Driscoll

Continued on Page 4

S-CAR's Annual Welcome Dinner

Balsamic Chicken & Innovation

By Mark Hardee, S-CAR Newsletter Editor, mhardee2@gmu.edu

On September 8, 2012, the School for Conflict Analysis held its annual Welcome Dinner, open to all faculty, staff, and students. The dinner provided an opportunity for friends, colleagues, and acquaintances of past years to come together and express their projections for the future of S-CAR, with fresh and innovative input from new scholars and practitioners.

The event began with an introductory speech by Solon Simmons, and from there it was established to be much more than a simple reunion and meet-and-greet. Richard Rubenstein had the opportunity to introduce the school's faculty members, and Julie Shedd acknowledged the full variety of the visiting scholars that were present for the evening. While this dinner was a fun and engaging social experience to those who attended, S-CAR benefited in more ways than one. The sheer diversity of cultures and intellectual backgrounds present at the banquet afforded an opportunity to draw on various conceptions of what the conflict analysis and resolution field should be, and subsequently enabled S-CAR to capitalize on innovation.

Perhaps the best term to capture the meaning of this event was 'resonance.' To gauge what res-

onated with each attendee when they thought of S-CAR and the role the school plays in the practical and academic worlds, Lisa Shaw invited those who attended to discuss the terms that came to mind when they thought of the school. Members of each table then selected one or two terms that resonated for their group and shared them with the larger audience. Among the terms proposed, it seemed that the phrasing was extremely important in revealing how attendees advocated for a practice-oriented future informed by theory and knowledge. This builds on the practical foundation S-CAR has constructed over the years. Examples include: 'hope for our home,' 'infiltration of conflict,' 'honor the past,' 'crossroad of theory, research, and practice,' 'pragmatic and successful,' and 'evolving and relevant.' This interactive conceptualization of the inherent nature of the school both diversifies and focuses future initiatives that S-CAR's students, staff, and faculty may choose to engage in.

Using the Welcome Dinner as a springboard, S-CAR as a community must delve headlong into this very realizable future. As is to be expected, our community will do this first by analyzing the past, then resolving to build on its success. ■



Dean Bartoli and S-CAR students at the 2012 Annual S-CAR Welcome Dinner. Photo: S-CAR.

events

Insight Conflict Resolution Program

Theory, Research, and Practice

By Alessandra Cuccia, S-CAR M.S. Student, insight@gmu.edu

The Insight Conflict Resolution Program (ICRP) is a center of theory, research and practice at S-CAR that is focused on developing the Insight approach to conflict analysis and resolution and applying it to transform deep rooted social conflict. ICRP started in 2010 with a grant from the Sargent Shriver Peace Institute. Sargent Shriver, the master peace builder who renewed trust in America through the Peace Corps and brought voice and agency to disenfranchised Americans through the War on Poverty, is its icon.

The Insight approach is a cutting edge contribution to the field. It uses Bernard Lonergan's critical, reflexive philosophy as a framework for explaining what we are doing when we are in conflict and when we disengage from it. The Insight approach directs our attention and curiosity toward our operations of consciousness. It asks how the meanings we construct and the value we assign to those meanings pattern the decisions we make. The goal of ICRP is to articulate and implement a method in peacebuilding that can consistently and reliably enable the kind of social change that builds sustainable peace.

One focus of ICRP is the persistent problem of retaliatory violence, especially pertaining to retaliatory homicide in the United States. Retaliatory homicide is a problem that not only affects individuals that are involved in the violence but also the communities surrounding these regrettable, preventable events. In January of 2012, ICRP started working on the Retaliatory Violence Insight Project (RVIP). ICRP, through a grant provided by the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, has set out to develop retaliatory violence interventions with law enforcement based on the Insight approach. RVIP focuses its research and practice in two cities in the United States: Lowell, Massachusetts and Memphis, Tennessee. Megan Price, a Ph.D student at S-CAR, is the current Director of ICRP and also contributing to the Retaliatory Violence Insight Project. Dr. Jamie Price, along with Megan and Frederick Johnson of Intersections International travel to these neighborhoods and bring along with them the Insight approach to help these areas tackle retaliatory violence. By looking at the dilemma of retaliatory violence through an Insight lens, Dr. Jamie Price and Megan hope to help change retaliatory dynamics within these struggling communities.



Dr. Jamie Price and Ph.D. Student Megan Price in Lowell, MA.
Photo: S-CAR.

ICRP has planned many engaging events throughout the semester. On September 18th, Megan presented an "Introduction to the Insight Approach to Conflict Resolution" at the Center for Peacemaking Practice (CPP) Lunch, where a background on the Insight approach was described, followed by a discussion on its applications in the conflict analysis and resolution field.

The following week, on September 25th, ICRP launched its Insight Practice Lab. All students and faculty were welcome to join ICRP in learning, practicing and refining their Insight skills. Insight Practice Lab sessions will continue every other Tuesday following the launch in Truland Building room 555 from 12-2pm.

Dr. Jamie Price of S-CAR and Marnie Jull of Carleton University in Ottawa will also be teaching a class, Insight Micro-Skills or CONF 795, during the Fall 2012 semester at S-CAR. During the weekend of October 12th and the following four Wednesdays from 7:00-9:00pm, this one-credit integrated theory and practice class will teach students conflict resolution skills in interpersonal mediation, group facilitation and action research for social intervention.

The Insight Conflict Resolution Program can be reached by email at insight@gmu.edu or by phone at (703)-993-8305. ■

initiatives

diverse abilities, diverse interests, and corresponding opinions about religion, politics, economics, and society, and loyalties to select political leaders have “divided mankind into parties, influenced them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to cooperate for the common good.”⁶

The dynamic interaction between a conflict-prone “human nature” and conflict-embedded political system renders conflict on the American political landscape as inevitable. The core question then becomes, “how is conflict handled?” Despite the systemic breakdown of the Civil war (1861-1865) and near collapse generated by the Vietnam war (1960s/1970s), the U.S. has tended not to descend into the Hobbesian “state of nature,” where “the life of men [is] solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”⁷ Indeed, the state of the American “leviathan” is relatively resilient! But this resilience is always at risk of being undermined by a dilemma: “In a democratic system moderate conflict is both inevitable and desirable”⁸ because conflict can drive essential change. “Severe

political conflict [however,] is undesirable, for it can endanger *any* political system.”⁹ A democratic system can mitigate this dilemma only if conflict is kept manageable. But how is this done?

Maintaining conflict within tolerable parameters means avoiding severe conflict, which develops when a conflict has been framed as zero-sum and about high stakes, e.g., about incompatible ways of life, in which the parties view themselves as enemies to be destroyed. The intensity of conflict rises also when there is an increase in the number of actors who hold extreme, opposing views and when there is an increase in the number of other conflicts along the same lines of cleavage.¹⁰

Given these criteria, we could easily conclude that current political conflict in the U.S. is severe, with implications for systemic breakdown. Although Democrats and President Obama are not blameless, much of the credit for this sorry state of affairs, according to Republicans and former Republicans, goes to the GOP.¹¹ Indeed, as the former Republican governor of Florida Charlie Crist said at the Democratic National Convention, “I didn’t leave the Republican Party; it left me.”¹² Former Republican Mike Lofgren, a long-time staffer for Congressman John Kasich of Ohio, a conservative fiscal hawk, indicates, in his new book,¹³ that he left the Republican Party because it had been taken over by crackpots and lunatics, “an apocalyptic cult [in which] a disciplined minority of totalitarians can use the instruments of democratic government to undermine democracy itself.”¹⁴ Further, “The party’s cynical electoral strategy was to deadlock government and thus undermine the public’s faith in it and its presumed allies, the Democrats. Beholden to billionaires, the military-industrial complex and Armageddon-craving fundamentalists, the party of Abraham Lincoln had become a threat to the nation’s future.”¹⁵

Climate change is one issue where the Republican position lacks credibility and about which Republicans and Democrats are in profound conflict. In his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Mitt Romney made only one reference to climate change by mocking President Obama: “Four years ago, the president promised to begin slowing the rise of the oceans. And heal the planet. My promise is to help you and your family.”¹⁶ By contrast, in his acceptance speech a week later at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, Barack Obama responded to Mr.



Photo: Flickr User University of Denver.

Upcoming S-CAR Community Events

Tuesday, October 23, 2012

Insight Practice Lab

12pm-2pm, Truland Building Room 555

Wednesday, October 24, 2012

Lynch Lecture

7pm-9pm, Founders Hall Room 125

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

Revisiting the Theory of Reflective Judgement

4:30pm-6:30pm, Truland Building Room 555

<http://scar.gmu.edu/events-roster>

Continued on Page 7

Improving Rhetoric About Rape: The Todd Akin Comments

By Elizabeth Degi, S-CAR Ph.D Student, Dean's Fellow on Gender & Violence, edegi@gmu.edu

Rep. Todd Akin's (R-MO) bombastic comments about "legitimate rape" should be heard as an urgent call for practitioners, researchers, and theorists working in the conflict analysis and resolution field to highlight more empirically sound understandings of rape, power and gendered violence within the public and political spheres. The recent political hoopla following Akin's statement that a woman's body has the ability to "shut down" a pregnancy resulting from "legitimate rape" suggests that Akin's comments were atypical of rhetoric on sexual violence, abortion, and women's health. However, despite wide condemnations from both the established Right and Left, critical analysis of public and political discourse surrounding rape suggests that Akin's comments reflect larger the political discourse on rape, victimization, and reproductive justice.

Last year the "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act" (H.R. 3)—which would have cut off federal funding for Medicaid recipients seeking an abortion unless a woman could prove that she had been 'forcibly' raped—went to the House floor with more than 150 co-sponsors from both established political parties. Outside of the political sphere, rape jokes have become mainstream—see Daniel Tosh's shameful attempt to silence a heckler in July at L.A.'s famed Laugh Factory, saying, "Wouldn't it be funny if that girl got raped by, like, five guys right now? Like right now?" Just as disturbing as jokes like Tosh's (and the hordes of comedians that defended his comments) is the recent rise of the use of rape as a metaphor, ie: "The Yankees raped the Red Sox." As feminist sociologist Michael Kimmel glibly illustrated how absurdly inappropriate such comparisons are in his August 23 op-ed for the Huffington Post, "You got raped? Me too! I totally got raped in that math quiz."

The current state of public and political discourse on sexual violence holds ghastly implications. The 'legitimate rape' discourse reinforces narrow conceptions of sexual violence that are deeply discordant with the lived experiences of most victims. Rape is positioned as an act of violence committed by a threatening, unknown male perpetrator who attacks a vulnerable female victim. Leading theorists and researchers on sexual violence argue that this construct excludes the vast amount of sexual violence—which often occurs between acquaintances or intimate partners. The

Recent S-CAR Articles, Op-Eds, Letters to the Editor, and Media Appearances

Could a Nuclear Iran Bring About More Stability, Rather Than Less?

Marc Gopin, S-CAR Professor, Director of CRDC
The Huffington Post, 9/12/12

The Anatomy of an Anti-Taliban Uprising

David H. Young, S-CAR Masters Alumnus
Foreign Policy, 9/12/12

Democratic Party Looks Like America

Michael Shank, S-CAR Ph.D. Alumnus
The Hill, 9/6/12

Only Catastrophes Lead to the Sharing of Sovereignty

Dennis J.D. Sandole, S-CAR Professor
The Financial Times, 8/9/12

<http://scar.gmu.edu/media>

narrow construct implied by the 'forcible' rape discourse tacitly implies that any rape that doesn't fit within this conceptualization was in part a result of victims' behaviors—what they were doing, what they were wearing, what they were drinking. Furthermore, this construct further stigmatizes men who have been victims of sexual violence. While the US Dept. of Justice has reported that one out of every thirty-three men has been raped, the pervasive conception of a rape delegitimizes these victims' experiences.

While the 'legitimate' rape discourse impacts all victims of sexual violence, calls to legislatively redefine rape as within this narrow framework has even harsher implications for women victims on Medicaid seeking to terminate a pregnancy resulting from rape. Politicians' cries to end federal funding for abortion serves a means of garnering votes from pro-life constituents at the expense of the relatively narrow cross section of society directly dependent on Medicaid funding for abortion: low-income, minority women with little political capital. We in the CAR field must view the current state of discourse surrounding rape and reproductive rights as an auspicious opportunity for addressing intersections of direct and structural violence. ■

press

Soolmaz Abooali, Incoming S-CAR Ph.D. Student

By Kwaw de Graft-Johnson, S-CAR Ph.D. Student and Knowledge Management Associate, kdegraff@gmu.edu

Soolmaz Abooali is part of an exciting class of Fall 2012 Ph.D. students joining the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. She brings a unique perspective to the program, as she is a very accomplished amateur athlete. This is evident in her being a seven-time U.S. National Champion and a World Silver Medalist in Shotokan Karate, a traditional style of martial arts.

Soolmaz is no stranger to the dynamics of conflict. After the Islamic revolution in Iran, she became a refugee from a very young age. Having spent some time in various locations like Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Canada, Soolmaz and her family eventually came to settle in the United States.

Like many people who are forced to relocate to a totally different culture, she had to navigate and rise above various internal conflicts. She had to develop an identity that would fit her new surroundings and at the same time complement her Iranian heritage. As she stated, “karate put me in the position to constantly self-evaluate under pressure-cooker situations, such as identifying my strengths and weaknesses, my goals, and who I want to be. Because of this

type of training—and thus evolution—I was able to better navigate through and overcome challenging periods in my life.”

One of her role models is Miyamoto Musashi, a famous Japanese swordsman whose sharp skills, desire for excellence, and vision made him an accomplished warrior and statesman. Those same values, she stated, “drive me to have big dreams and persist, like bees to honey, until I achieve them.” She hopes she can contribute in an innovative way to conflict resolution by utilizing the martial arts in a “mind, body, spirit” approach that empowers others in conflict settings. Ultimately, she hopes her experiences and evolving research at SCAR will help chart a unique and dynamic course of action for women in conflict around the world. ■



Soolmaz Abooali, S-CAR Ph.D. Student. Photo: S-CAR.

Meet the rest of our new PhD students at scar.gmu.edu/phd-program/2012-phd-cohort

Clara Driscoll, Incoming S-CAR Masters Student

By Kwaw de Graft-Johnson, S-CAR Ph.D. Student and Knowledge Management Associate, kdegraff@gmu.edu

Clara Driscoll grew up in a bilingual household (Danish and English), and lived in Denmark and Singapore. Clara’s parents taught her to place value on travel, exploring different cultures and developing an intellectual curiosity about how the world works. After graduating from Johns Hopkins University in 1999 with a degree in history, Clara joined the United States Army and received a commission as an Army officer. During her 13 years in the Army she has lived and worked in Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Qatar, Kuwait, Italy, and Germany. She made it her goal to develop a genuine interest in the history, culture and, when applicable, conflict that exists in each of those countries. According to Clara, “my time in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo impressed upon me the importance of cooperation amongst all stakeholders in effectively dealing with conflict.”

Clara applied to the S-CAR program because she had a keen desire to better understand conflict and the methods by which it can be resolved. As she said, “I have a real world knowledge of the damage that severe conflict can cause and an appreciation for the role



Clara Driscoll, S-CAR Masters Student. Photo: S-CAR.

of nonviolent methods of resolution.”

As a newcomer to the S-CAR program and the academic field of conflict resolution, she has yet to decide what her focus in the program will be, but she is very interested in the roles that culture and religion play in international conflict. Upon graduation from S-CAR, she hopes to use her Masters degree to further the cooperation among stakeholders in the resolution of conflict in conflict and post conflict settings. Clara says, “After the military I will likely seek employment with either USAID or the State Department. My husband, who is also an Army officer, and I moved to the area so that I could attend S-CAR. Currently, we live in Old Town Alexandria with our dogs Gus and Sofie.” ■

American Democracy & Conflict

Continued from page 4

Romney by stressing the urgency of the issue and its importance for American families that is beyond politics; i.e., “climate change is not a hoax. More droughts and floods and wildfires are not a joke. They are a threat to our children’s future.”¹⁷

Former President Bill Clinton’s rousing, inclusive, conflict resolution-friendly speech in Charlotte further reflects the Republican – Democrat divide on multiple issues:

“We Democrats think the country works better ... with business and government working together to promote growth and broadly shared prosperity. We think “we’re all in this together” is a better philosophy than “you’re on your own.” ...

It turns out that advancing equal opportunity and economic empowerment is both morally right and good economics, because discrimination, poverty and ignorance restrict growth, while investments in education, infrastructure and scientific and technological research increase it, creating more good jobs and new wealth for all of us.

Though I often disagree with Republicans, I never learned to hate them the way the far right that now controls their party seems to hate President Obama and the Democrats. ...

When times are tough, constant conflict may be good politics but in the real world, cooperation works better. ... Unfortunately, the faction that now controls the Republican Party doesn’t see it that way. They think government is the enemy, and compromise is weakness.

One of the main reasons America should re-elect President Obama is that he is still committed to cooperation ... [to building] a world with more partners and fewer enemies.

President Obama’s record on national security is a tribute to his strength, and judgment, and to his preference for inclusion and partnership over partisanship.

He also tried to work with Congressional Republicans on Health Care, debt reduction, and jobs, but that didn’t work out so well. Probably because, as the Senate Republican leader, in a remarkable moment of candor, said two years before the election, their number one priority was not to put America back to work, but to put President Obama out of work.”¹⁸

For his part, Governor Romney recently generated further conflict, not only with Democrats but with half of the American electorate. According to videos of a fundraiser held in Boca Raton, Florida

on May 17, 2012, the candidate is seen and heard stating, “There are 47 per cent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what ... who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe that the government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe they are entitled to housing, to you-name-it ... These are people who pay no income tax. My job is not to worry about those people. I’ll never convince them they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.”¹⁹

Not only does Mr. Romney hint that, if elected, he would not serve as president of all Americans, but he discounts the desire of Palestinians to live in peace with Israel, that all Palestinians are “committed to the destruction and elimination of Israel,” a view which clashes with the Republican Party’s own platform on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Clearly, Mr. Romney does not believe that “we’re all in this together,” whether in his own party, nationally, or globally!

The virulent 2012 presidential campaign, severe levels of conflict between Democrats and Republicans on multiple issues, and the continued neck-in-neck status of the two candidates, raises a compelling question: Must “catastrophic crises” (e.g., World War 2 and the Holocaust) precede structural change (e.g., establishing the UN and EU)? In other words, could the looming forced spending cuts called for by the Budget Control Act of 2011, otherwise known as “sequestration”—scheduled to become operational as of January 2013—constitute enough of a “catastrophic crisis” to capture the attention of the two campaigns and political parties so that they start working together instead of against each other?

It would be ideal if, at one of the three debates between President Obama and Governor Romney, the moderator would ask the two candidates (a) what they would do now to avert the “catastrophic crisis” and potential systemic breakdown posed by sequestration, and (b) how, if the draconian cuts took effect, President Obama or President Romney would deal with those cuts and their destabilizing consequences during the next four years.

Such an exercise would hopefully force the candidates to transcend scripted one-liners on complex issues and actually “think” before they speak, thereby providing the American people with relevant information about which political party and which candidate are more competent for enacting creative policies that would contrib-

Continued on Page 8

American Democracy & Conflict

Continued from page 7

ute to enhancing and further developing the national and global "commons!" ■

1. The author gratefully acknowledges Dr. Ingrid Sandole Staroste (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, GMU) and Yasmina Mrabet (former editor of SCARNews) who read and commented on an earlier version of this article.

2. See <<http://www.datalounge.com/cgi-bin/iowa/ajax.html?t=11045355#page:showThread,11045355>>.

3. See Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy in the United States: Promise and Performance*, 4th edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 281.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 274.

6. Cited in Dahl, 1981, p. 274.

7. Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan*, first published in 1651.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 276.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 276-283.

11. See Thomas Mann and Norman Ornstein, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided With*

the New Politics of Extremism, 2012; and Mike Lofgren, *The Party is Over: How Republicans Went Crazy, Democrats Became Useless, and the Middle Class Got Shafted*, New York: 2012.

12. See <<http://www.politifact.com/florida/statements/2012/sep/06/charlie-crist/crist-jeb-bush-ronald-reagan-moderate-gop/>>.

13. Mike Lofgren, *The Party is Over: How Republicans Went Crazy, Democrats Became Useless, and the Middle Class Got Shafted*, New York: 2012.

14. Cited in Colin Woodward, "Hurling blame in all directions (Review of *The Party is Over*)", *The Washington Post*, September 16, 2012, p. B7.

15. *Ibid.*

16. <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/09/201291082334804592.html>>.

17. *Ibid.*

18. See <<http://www.macon.com/2012/09/05/2164298/full-text-of-bill-clintons-speech.html>>.

19. See http://search.aol.com/aol/search?enabled_terms=&s_it=wscreen50-bb&q=There+are+47+per+cent+of+the+people+who+will+vote+for+the+president+no+matter+what+Mitt+Romney.

20. Scott Wilson and Ed O'Keefe, "Romney told donors Palestinians don't want peace with Israel," *The Washington Post*, September 19, 2012, p. A5.



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S-CAR's Center for the Study of Gender and Conflict

By Dr. Leslie Dwyer, S-CAR Assistant Professor and Director, Center for the Study of Gender and Conflict, ldwyer2@gmu.edu and Elizabeth D. Mount, S-CAR Ph.D. Student and Dean's Fellow on Gender and Violence, elizabeth@mountdegi.com

Over the past decade, gender has emerged as a core global issue for the conflict analysis and resolution field. In 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, calling for the integration of gender issues into all levels of peacebuilding practice as well as increased attention to the needs of women in conflict zones. Today, virtually all major international organizations engaged in conflict prevention and resolution incorporate gender into their projects, and a slate of international conventions, laws, and networks exist to promote attention to gender issues as key dimensions of conflict.

And yet, a quick glance around the peacebuilding arena reveals that there is still



Photo: S-CAR.

tremendous work to be done. Research by UN Women found that less than 8% of recent Track One negotiating teams included women, with less than 3% of peace agreements involving women signatories. Despite an abundance of evidence demonstrating the specific effects of armed conflict on women civilians and combatants, a similarly scant number of formal agreements address issues of central concern to

women, including the prevalence of sexual assault as a strategy of warfare, the challenges women face reintegrating into societies in the aftermath of conflict, or the need to promote gender equality and women's empowerment as central to thriving local mechanisms of conflict resolution. Peacebuilding work at the Track Two and grassroots levels has, arguably, gone further in integrating gender issues into programming, yet it has been slow to move past a paradigm that sees women as simply victims of conflicts waged by "men with guns," rather than powerful social actors in their own right.

Continued on Page 7

Inside This Issue...

- 2 Network: Conflict Resolution Collaborative
- 3 Initiatives: S-CAR at the UN on the International Day of Peace
- 4 Events: 24th Annual Lynch Lecture
- 5 Press: S-CAR Op-Eds, Letters to the Editor, and Media Appearances.
Student Opinion: Drones: Friend or Foe?
- 6 Spotlight: Adeeb Yousif
Spotlight: Tatiana Medina

commentary

Conflict Resolution Collaborative: S-CAR joins forces with Beyond Intractability to Grow the Resources Available to the Field

By Paul Snodgrass, S-CAR Technology and Knowledge Management Director, psnodgra@gmu.edu



The CR Collaborative. Photo: S-CAR.

When Heidi Burgess delivered the commencement address in May of 2012, the S-CAR Community got a sneak preview of the prospects provided by stronger ties between the School and the minds behind Beyond Intractability (BI) and CR Info. With one important collaborative project already underway at that time and many more that have since kicked off, we are already seeing the exciting rewards that this collaboration has yielded.

The first collaborative effort was a special edition of the BI knowledge base for Genocide Prevention and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). A DVD version of the website has been created and is periodically taken to Africa and distributed to ICGLR.

Building upon this success, the Conflict Resolution Collaborative was formed to formalize and guide a series of collaborative efforts between BI and S-CAR. Andrea Bartoli, Heidi and Guy Burgess, and Paul Snodgrass comprise the executive committee of the Collaborative, and what follows is an overview of several exciting initiatives.

A number of S-CAR students, known as BI Contributors, have begun to write book reviews, case studies and articles on beyondintractability.org. Led by Borislava Manojlovic, Associate Editor, four book reviews have already been published and several more are in the pipeline. Alessandra Cuccia reviewed *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*, by Cheryl Picard and Kenneth Melchin. Nhina Le reviewed *The Paradox of Free-Market Democracy: Indonesia and the Problems Facing Neoliberal Reform*, by Amy Chua as well as *Reasons to Kill: Why Americans Choose War*, by Richard Rubenstein. Also, Mark Magellan reviewed *The Moral Imagination* by John Paul Lederach. The BI Contributors have also spearheaded a process of adding S-CAR publications to the database of BI.

This fall the Burgesses have been teaching a class entitled Peacebuilding Knowledge Base with

eight students, all of which are writing pieces for BI as their primary class project. A similar class is being offered this spring. Entitled Peacebuilding Writ Large, students will examine the concept of “peacebuilding writ large”—also being called “peacebuilding 2.0”—and the role that the BI Knowledge Base and Collaborative Learning Community can play in building peace at the broadest levels. Students again will have the opportunity to write one or more pieces to be published on BI. This three-credit class is available to new students as well as to students who participated in this fall’s CONF 795.

Susan Allen Nan and the Center for Peacemaking Practice are also working with BI to update the collection of practitioner interviews and CPP members Phil Gamaghelyan and Christopher Littlefield have written a piece for BI on facilitator co-debriefing which will be published soon. Dan Rothbart and Adeeb Yousif Abdel Alla are writing two articles on Sudan, and over ten other S-CAR articles are “in the BI pipeline.” CONF 210, taught by Ms. Manojlovic and Dr. Bartoli asks students, “how can we contribute to” and “how can BI help us?”

Dr. Bartoli, Mr. Snodgrass, Drs. Burgess, as well as Ernest Ogbozor and Cat Meurn are leading a project entitled “Love and Forgiveness in the Governing Professions,” funded by the Fetzer Institute. In September, Mr. Snodgrass and Dr. Bartoli presented the project at the Fetzer Institute’s Global Gathering in Assisi and work is ongoing to create profiles of people who exemplify love and forgiveness in governance. These profiles will be posted on BI, S-CAR and the Fetzer Institute’s websites.

Beyondintractability.org has long been an invaluable resource for the field and S-CAR has a rich history of contributing articles and interviews to the vast collection of material hosted there. It is with a view toward strengthening, updating and sustaining BI and contributing to the field as a whole that S-CAR has engaged in this collaborative project. For students at S-CAR, there are many exciting opportunities to publish and BI is a terrific place for their writing to be read and to have an impact. BI is currently used by about 100,000 unique visitors a month and that number has been rising by about 10,000 people per month for the last several months. Publishing on BI gets your ideas out to many, many people! ■

Imagine All the People Living Life in Peace:

S-CAR Students Participate in the United Nations' International Day of Peace

By Anthony Reo, S-CAR Undergraduate Student, areo@masonlive.gmu.edu

Arthur Romano took the floor at the 30th observance of the United Nations International Day of Peace ceremony in New York City on September 21. “The International Day of Peace is the symbolic act of bringing people together. It is easy to feel isolated when trying to build peace on this planet,” Romano said,

“but we are not alone.” With five hundred students from all over the world listening to his presentation, including the familiar faces of undergraduate Conflict Analysis and Resolution students, it was clear that there are communities dedicated to building and maintaining sustainable international peace.

Demonstrating their commitment to this issue, a group of mostly undergraduate students was selected to display their own projects promoting peace at the UN Headquarters during the International Day of Peace ceremony. The projects ranged from a campaign to reduce profanity on campus to starting a chapter of the veterans’ honor society to bridging cultural gaps in residence halls.

Kim Posthumus, a junior at S-CAR with a minor in theater, is planning to bring the International Day of Peace to Mason’s campus in 2013. Incorporating music and performance into the event, Posthumus wholeheartedly believes in theater’s ability to broaden our perspective.

“In stepping into a role other than yourself, you are able to experience empathy that you were unable to experience before because you are literally putting yourself in someone else’s shoes,” she said.

Peter Cuppernull, another S-CAR student chosen



United Nations' International Day of Peace Ticket. Photo: S-CAR.

Wiesel, and actor Michael Douglas exposed the students to how conflict resolution is practiced outside of the classroom in a wide range of capacities. The experience also encouraged deep contemplation of the condition of our global society. Dr. Romano said, “Pause and remember the deep and irreversible impact violence has over multiple generations,” as the deep tone of the Peace Bell echoed in the hearts of the students and dignitaries. In the panel discussion following, Michael Douglas cautioned, “We haven’t found anything else in the universe. All we have is our vulnerable planet.”



S-CAR students outside the United Nations. Photo: S-CAR.

Posthumus reflected, “Peace is living in a state of happiness that encourages the happiness of other people.” Regardless of what sort of future we all envision, we must find it in ourselves to encourage this mindset, for it is *our* future that is at stake. ■

to attend the event, wants to work with sustainable peace building in post-civil war Yugoslavia. He turned his words into practice last summer by accepting an offer interning with the Croatian government and intends to do the same next summer.

Hearing from dignitaries such as the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, author Ellie

Despite the violence that litters our planet, a positive and hopeful exuberance permeated the day, felt by everyone in attendance and embodied by the dedication of our generation. “Dramatic and transformative social change has young people in positions of leadership,” Romano exclaimed, challenging students to see peace as a way of thinking, a way of living.

initiatives

Peacebuilding vs. Conflict Resolution

Vivienne Jabri's Provocative Lynch Lecture

By Richard E. Rubenstein, S-CAR Professor, rrubenst@gmu.edu

Events

On October 24, 2012 Vivienne Jabri presented the 24th Annual Lynch Lecture to a large, enthusiastic audience in the auditorium of Founder's Hall on George Mason's Arlington campus. Dr. Jabri is Professor of International Politics and Coordinator of the Centre for the Study of Political Community at King's College in London, and is a long-time friend of S-CAR. Those expecting her to deliver an important and controversial lecture were not disappointed.

The speaker began her talk, entitled "Human Rights, Sovereign Rights, and Conflict Resolution," by taking the audience on a journey through the intellectual landscapes created by Immanuel Kant, Jurgen Habermas, and Michel Foucault, with a fourth stop, the political thought of Hannah Arendt, concluding the trip. A key point in the lecture was the separation of peacebuilding, defined as "the government of other people's populations," from conflict resolution and diplomacy.

Kant, described as "the first Critical Theorist," put the autonomous, self-legislating human being at the center of his system. By constructing a "cosmopolitan imaginary" in which these suffering individuals are the bearers of rights, Kant becomes the first theorist of human rights. But he argues against making the cosmopolitan regime a positive legal order, and so defends the sovereign state against the idea of empire.

Habermas gives cosmopolitanism positive force by announcing that human rights trump sovereign rights, and that sovereignty must be pacified to create the conditions necessary for Kant's "perpetual peace." Modern international civil servants like Boutros-Ghali and Kofi Annan agree. An "international civil service at large" comes into existence, and law-enforcing institutions like the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court partially realize the juridical dream. But this immediately creates a problem: peacebuilding threatens to replace both conflict resolution and diplomacy. Since "the law is constituted in a sovereign speaking" and rests not only on consent but also on violence, the new system seeks to legitimate violent interventions by some states (a reconstituted "sovereign") in the affairs of others.

By asking "Where is sovereign power?" and describing how it is exercised, Foucault lays bare the underlying dynamics of the new peacebuilding regime. Sovereign power always demands an audience, which now consists of those subject to military intervention in the name of humanity. Its late-modern form is disciplinary and biopolitical, meaning that it is a regime of pacification of populations exercised through surveillance and continuous intervention – the very opposite of Kant's "perpetual peace." Although the new sovereign has values and interests of its own, its wars are always fought in the name of humanity at large. This implies a norm from which "abnormals" are excluded, and generates a tendency toward the sort of massive, even genocidal, violence represented by colonial wars and the Holocaust.

Dr. Jabri "internationalizes" Foucault. According to her, peacebuilding discourses are essentially Foucauldian, constituting the liberal subject, and presuming to shape the development of "less developed" societies. The problem is dramatically illustrated by recent Western interventions in places like Libya and Syria, in which peacebuilding – the attempt to "shape the directionality" of other societies in ways congenial to the intervening powers – tends to replace both conflict resolution and diplomacy. (This is precisely why Kant withheld his approval of

Upcoming S-CAR Community Events

Tuesday, November 27, 2012
Revisiting the Theory of Reflective Judgement
Truland Building 555, 4:30pm-6:30pm

Tuesday, November 27, 2012
Civilians and Modern War: Armed Conflict and the Ideology of Violence - Book Launch
Truland Building 555, 7:15pm-9:15pm

Wednesday, November 28, 2012
Gender & Genocide: Masculinity, Femininity, & the Potentials of GBV as an Early Indicator of Genocide
Truland Building, Seventh Floor, 6:30pm-9:00pm

Wednesday, December 5, 2012
An Evening with the Palestinian Ambassador
Truland Building 555, 7:30pm-9:00pm

<http://scar.gmu.edu/events-roster>

Continued on page 7

Student Opinion: Drones: Friend or Foe?

By Allyson Mitchell, S-CAR MS Student, amitch11@masonlive.gmu.edu



MQ-9 Reaper. Photo: Flickr User Official U.S. Air Force.

Modern day warfare has altered the guidelines of war and changed the way combatants fight; conflicts have been relocated from the classic battlefield location to populated urban centers amongst the daily lives of civilians. This has a tendency to blur the boundaries between being able to differentiate civilians from hostiles in a combat environment. Drone strikes have become the modus operandi for United States strategy of fighting terrorism worldwide. By infusing billions of dollars each year into the defense budget, the United States has remained on the forefront of research, design, development, and ultimately, the deployment of high-tech military weapons. This has allowed the United States military to maintain an unprecedented monopoly on these technologies.

Armed with precision-guided Hellfire missiles, drones can hover over one area for hours, days, or even weeks. All the while the intelligence operative, who is in control of the surveillance of that drone, is sitting at a desk in Langley or at a military base in the Mid-west working normal business hours. When orders are given, that operative will fire, and thousands of miles away that missile will damage everything in its path. The appeal is clear; a State can exercise targeted killings and operate remotely at nominal risk. That said, sustainment costs might be arguably low, but the human costs are regrettably high. When drone strikes are authorized, it is not only the intended target that is killed; there is always collateral damage.

When it comes to drone strike death tolls, we hear through the new channels that "the majority appear to have been militants." But how do we really know if they were 'militants' or better yet, how are we, as a society, defining 'militant?' Is a

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Aziz Abu Sarah, Executive Director, Center for World Religions,

Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution

Journeys of Belonging, 11/3/12

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militant the 4-year-old son of the intended target? How about the housekeeper, or the nanny? How about the neighborhood grocer where he buys his food? The restaurant owner of the café he frequents? What of the taxi driver that just happened to pick him up that day because his driver was ill? All of these civilians have known ties to terrorism, but does that make them 'militants' or 'terrorists?' To say the distinction might be blurring at times is a stretch, since the distinction is never 100% clear. Clarity only arrives after the fact, when mothers, brothers, husbands, sisters, and wives are crying in the streets over the loss of their loved ones asking, "God, why us?"

We need to think on these things before we freely accept the labels being tossed around by officials and experts. I would not want to be wrongly classified as a 'militant' or 'terrorist,' would you? ■

press

Adeeb Yousif, S-CAR Ph.D. Student

By Kwaw de Graft-Johnson, Ph.D. Student and Knowledge Management Associate, kdegraff@gmu.edu

Adeeb Yousif hails from Darfur in Sudan, and for over 14 years, has worked with grass roots and social justice movements throughout the country in trying to alleviate the plight of individuals from what he describes as “unfortunate circumstances.” In April of 2001, he co-founded the Sudan Social Development Organization (SUDO), a human rights, humanitarian relief, and development NGO that he hoped would complement the efforts of the other stakeholders working in the region. As Adeeb indicated, “most of the other NGOs did not take their services deep inside rural areas to empower local communities to demand their rights from the government,” and this was one of the objectives of his organization.

In addition to this, he also helped to develop the Darfur Emergency Response Operation, which runs programs for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as well as host communities in

Darfur. He further helped to initiate the Rebel Letters Campaign and worked with Never Again International. All of his activities have made him unpopular with the Sudanese government but he reiterates, “I am unfazed in my goal to build the possibility for a sustainable peace in Darfur.”

Adeeb has also played a key role in making the plight of his people known to the outside world through on-the-ground facilitation of the work of many of the most high-profile researchers and writers, and through his own media work. Adeeb is currently working on his PhD at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and is also the General Manager of the Darfur Reconciliation and Development Organization (DRDO). He

asserts that both endeavors would enable him to “continue to dedicate his life to the humanitarian and human rights struggle to end the conflict and genocide in Darfur.” ■



Adeeb Yousif, S-CAR Ph.D. Student. Photo: S-CAR.

Tatiana Medina, S-CAR Masters Student

By Kwaw de Graft-Johnson, Ph.D. Student and Knowledge Management Associate, kdegraff@gmu.edu

Tatiana Medina-Laborde is a Masters student at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR) as well as a founding member and current President of the Global Problematique Working Group. Her motivation, along with other students, in forming this group was borne out of the realization that the world faced a myriad of interconnected conflicts that were not bound within borders.

As such, it required the concerted efforts from all stakeholders, not just from the noted relevant



Tatiana Medina, S-CAR Masters Student. Photo: S-CAR.

ones, in trying to develop sustainable and durable programs to resolve and transform conflicts. Tatiana has been working at a multilateral organization for over five years and she noted that, “The private sector has so much potential

to help move conflict resolution to transformation but such work has not been developed and is very much nonexistent at this point.”

Currently, Tatiana is trying to move the progress of the working group to a type of practice she has termed “Peace Entrepreneurship” and her trip to Colombia during the summer of 2012 reinforced the need for such a body. She described her trip as an eye opening experience regarding the difficulties and apparent disconnect of theory and practice to fieldwork. “There were many great potentials for partnership with local organizations but the big challenge is to structure the right programs for conflict resolution,” she said. “We (S-CAR) have a great number of skills and it’s our task to share and transfer this knowledge”. ■



Photo: S-CAR.

Peacebuilding Versus Conflict Resolution

Continued from page 4

juridical cosmopolitanism.) Because government (Foucault's "governmentality") now involves the disciplinary control of populations, "the borders of populations are racialized," and the juridical human rights regime comes to resemble the old colonial regimes that it purports to replace.

Despite this grim reality, Professor Jabri insists, there is reason for hope. The San Egidio Statement reflected the views of those opposed both to violent revolution and to allegedly humanitarian military intervention. They valued the post-colonial status of states like Syria, and advocated a "cosmopolitanism of recognition and solidarity" in place of an authoritarian juridical regime. The figure who best expresses such values, according to her, is Arendt, who, distinguishing government from politics, defines politics as "the insertion of self into the public arena, thereby constituting that

arena." Politics means active, participatory deliberation, not just governmentality (i.e., rule-making, administration, and intervention). Declaring herself a "small-r realist in the Arendtian sense," Dr. Jabri concludes by calling for a renewal of conflict resolution and diplomacy in order to affirm a post-colonial regime that recognizes differences and the need for genuine political activity.

Following her lecture, Professor Jabri made herself available for extensive questioning by the audience. She also spoke at several S-CAR forums and graduate classes, discussing topics ranging from reflective practice to narrative methodology and Critical Theory, and stimulating thoughtful discussion wherever she appeared. There was general agreement that her visit raised very important ideas for our consideration and greatly enriched the community as a whole. ■

S-CAR's Center for the Study of Gender and Conflict

Continued from page 1

Perhaps even more troubling, our practices of conflict resolution have lagged behind our theorizing when it comes to recognizing that gender is not just about paying attention to women's needs and potential, but deepening our understanding of how cultural and historical frameworks of masculinity and femininity help shape our sense of the possible. The field has overwhelmingly tended to reduce "gender" to "women," which has helped keep the systemic exclusions undergirding structural violence invisible and blocked our engagement with some of the most exciting theoretical developments within gender studies. Innovative means of addressing the underlying power dynamics that marginalize women, the GLBTQ community, and other historically subjugated populations are needed to extend S-CAR's long and vibrant tradition of exploring and addressing the structural roots of conflict.

This fall, S-CAR's Dean and Faculty Board approved the creation of a new Center for the Study of Gender and Conflict (CGC). The CGC will seek to bridge these gaps, and serve as a link between the academy and the field to deepen and expand our understanding of the gendered dimensions of conflict. Building upon a decade of intensive faculty-student engagement in gender-related work at S-CAR, the CGC is positioned to become a global thought leader in an increasingly important field of concern. Recognizing that gender impacts all facets of life, the CGC represents not a boundary marking off a specialized set of interests, but a true center point around which a diverse group of faculty, students and international partners can cohere and collaborate.

The potentials of the CGC can be seen in the work undertaken by its affiliated faculty and students. This semester, we have undertaken several major initiatives, including securing and disseminating funding for students to present original research at conferences, co-sponsoring, along with the Center for Narrative and Conflict Resolution, a discussion with Vivienne Jabri following the Annual Lynch Lecture, and hosting an innovative "moderated conversation" panel on Gender and Genocide in collaboration with the Genocide Prevention Program. The Gender and Genocide event is the first in the CGC's "Intersections" moderated conversation series. Each semester we will bring together members of the S-CAR community with leading gender scholars from around the world to push the theoretical boundaries on emergent issues. The moderated conversation, which is being held

November 28, 2012 at S-CAR's 7th floor atrium, illustrates both the collaborative partnerships CGC is committed to, as well as the potentials of applying gendered analytical frameworks. The conversation will move beyond discus-



Photo: S-CAR.

Continued on Page 8

S-CAR's Center for the Study of Gender and Conflict

Continued from page 7

sions of sexual violence in war to explore gender as a central element that foments and justifies genocide. Our own Dean Andrea Bartoli will be joined by guest scholars Adam Jones, executive director of Gendercide Watch, and scholars from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Committee on Conscience.

The CGC has also begun to collaborate with a range of partners to expand our theoretical and practical work. Along with S-CAR alumna Dr. Maneshka Eliatamby and S-CAR Ph.D. student Johnny Mack and their organization, Communities Without Boundaries International, we are developing a capacity-building program for grassroots peacebuilders that will offer students valuable experience working on gender issues in field settings. Directly undertaking a consultative role, we were invited to submit a working paper to the UN to assist in thinking through their agenda once the Millennium Development Goals draw to a close in 2015. Along with Dr. Thomas Flores and Dr. Sandra Cheldelin, we delivered a paper arguing for a need to innovate our measures of inequality, moving past the

neoliberal assumptions that reduce equality and empowerment to narrow economic indicators. We will continue to build these external partnerships as a way to both expand our own base of knowledge and create a pipeline to employment for our graduating students.

In parallel with these public initiatives, much of the work that we believe will build S-CAR into the leading global institution for studying gender and conflict will happen in our classrooms. The increasing attention to gender in conflict at the UN, USIP, and other organizations has led to a need for highly skilled practitioners and scholars—a need that CGC is uniquely positioned to address. Over the next twelve months, we will be increasing our curricular offerings on gender and conflict research, theory, and practice. Through our specialized courses, along with the efforts we have undertaken to increase our students' engagement in organizations working in the field, and our collaborations with scholars around the globe, the CGC is well poised to train and inspire the next generation of gender scholars and practitioners. ■



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